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ABSTRACT

Freshmen who received less than a 2.0 grade average during their first semester at college were asked to indicate on a written questionnaire the extent to which 68 factors were or were not a reason for their poor academic performance. Respondents were also encouraged to supply additional observations about their educational experiences that seemed significant to them in terms of their scholastic difficulties. The responses to the forced-choice items were factor-analyzed, and the report was organized according to a nine-category typology drawn from the analysis. The data are examined in terms of certain demographic characteristics of the survey participants. Freshmen placed the greatest responsibility for their low grades on their own lack of motivation, proper study habits, and attention to school work. Nonetheless, many students felt that institutional or environmental factors such as university and divisional requirements, faculty teaching and examination procedures, residence hall atmosphere, background in English, and the quality of academic advising also contributed to their problems. (Author/MSE)

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STUDENT LIFE RESEARCH SERVICE

Survey Report

Factors Affecting the Poor Academic Achievement of First-Term Freshmen at Miami

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The Office of Program Development

Miami University

May 1978

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INTRODUCTION

For practical and theoretical reasons, much research has been conducted in higher education on the academic problems encountered by entering college students. In this study, freshmen who received low grades during their first semester at Miami were asked to identify the factors they believed were most responsible for their scholastic performance. One obvious limitation of this kind of study is that the perceptions of some respondents might be distorted by rationalization. Nevertheless, it was felt that the findings would be sufficiently accurate to provide an insight as to the type of policies and programs needed to help new students who are having difficulties adjusting academically to college.

The questionnaire used in this survey, which is an expanded version of an instrument developed for a similar project in 1968 by W. D. Keister and Derrell Hart, contained 68 factors which could have adversely affected a student's scholastic achievement. The order in which the items were listed on the questionnaire was determined by random selection. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each factor was, or was not, a reason for their academic performance in their first semester at Miami. Survey participants also were encouraged to supply additional observations about their educational experiences at Miami which seemed significant to them in terms of their academic difficulties. The responses to the forced choice items were factor analyzed (a multivariate statistical technique for examining patterns of intercorrelations among many variables and isolating dimensions resulting from these patterns), and the items were combined into nine groups based on the analysis: Instruction, Study and Motivation, Institutional Incompatibility, Educational Background, Personal Frustration, Advising and Counseling, Personal Problems, Finances, and Interest in Courses. This report was organized according to this typology, with the data presented by category. The final section of the study examines those factors which the freshmen emphasized most heavily as the reasons for their lack of academic achievement.

In addition to a presentation of the overall results, the data were analyzed on the basis of certain demographic characteristics of the survey participants. A complete breakdown of this background information and, where possible, the corresponding data from the entire 1977-78 freshman class, is in the Appendix. Unless otherwise noted, all reported differences within demographic subgroups were statistically significant to the .05 level using the Chi Square test. This means that there were no greater than five chances in 100 that the variations in the data could have been produced by chance. In any event, the significance level of particular findings was considerably less important in this study, since nearly all members of the targeted population were surveyed and the sampling error was therefore very small.

Procedure. All 375 first-term freshmen living on the Oxford campus who earned less than a 2.0 grade average during the fall semester of 1977 (and who returned for classes in the Spring) were asked to participate in the survey.

Not included in this group were 20 freshmen who received below a 2.0 but subsequently had their averages raised to at least this level by a grade change, the make-up of an incomplete, or the elimination of a "technical" F by petition. Respondents were individually administered the questionnaire by interviewers of the Student Life Research Service between February 8 and 11, 1978. Prior to being contacted by the interviewers, the eligible freshmen were sent a letter from the Vice President for Student Affairs, which explained the purpose of the project, urged their cooperation, and provided them with a telephone number to call if they did not wish to participate. The anonymity of all persons who took part in the survey was guaranteed. Usable returns were obtained from 301 students for a response rate of 80 percent. Computer processing for this study was handled by Tucker Barnhart of Administrative Data Processing.

I. INSTRUCTION

As the findings in Table 1 demonstrate, the freshmen in the study blamed problems with examinations more than any other factor pertaining to instruction for their academic performance first semester. Poor and unstimulating teaching by faculty was the next most heavily emphasized reason in this section. Female students seemed more willing than their male counterparts to believe that factors relating to instruction were responsible for their low grade average. A greater proportion of women than men named the following items as a moderate or major cause of their performance: nonstimulating instructors (52% to 39%), classes too large for personal attention (37% to 21%), examinations did not fairly evaluate my knowledge (57% to 34%), poor teaching by instructors (43% to 33%), too few examinations to demonstrate knowledge (61% to 44%), unfair grading by instructors (35% to 21%), and difficulty in taking examinations (74% to 57%).

Table 1. Degree to Which Respondents Felt that Factors Relating to Instruction Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Difficulty in taking examinations	15%	20%	32%	33%	2.83
Too few examinations to demonstrate knowledge	25	23	22	30	2.57
Examinations did not fairly evaluate my knowledge	22	33	25	20	2.42
Nonstimulating instructors	20	35	30	16	2.41
Poor teaching by instructors	29	33	22	16	2.25
Course requirements too demanding	28	38	24	9	2.14
Classes too large for personal attention	35	36	16	12	2.06
Unfair grading practices by instructors	45	27	18	9	1.92
Inability to see instructors out of class about academic questions or problems	48	26	15	12	1.90
Instructors not interested in students	47	32	12	9	1.84

(Mean Score: not a reason = 1, minor reason = 2, moderate reason =3, major reason = 4)

II. STUDY AND MOTIVATION

Problems related to study were clearly a chief factor in the low grades of the respondents — at least in their own minds. A majority of the freshmen indicated that their failure to schedule time wisely, to learn to study well, to keep up with course work and to develop adequate study habits were a major or moderate reason for their lack of academic accomplishment. Many of the students also admitted that they had an unrealistic idea of the amount of work required in college — especially compared to their high school experience. This was particularly true among women students. Thirty percent of whom cited this as a major reason for their performance. Several respondents openly commented on their misconception of the rigors of university life. One typical observation: "In high school, I rarely studied, and when I got here, I expected to study some but nothing like what was expected. Thus, I fell behind the first half of the semester and it was too late to pull up my grades." Similarly, another freshman noted that "When I first arrived I had no idea what to expect. I wasn't ready to study or to make any real attempt at classes. This put me behind right away. In high school I didn't need to study very much and when I arrived here I didn't know how to adapt to studying." Even some students who were highly successful in secondary school found themselves in difficulty. "College was simply not taken seriously," one such individual said ruefully. "I breezed through high school and came out in the number one position with very little effort."

Table 2. Degree to Which Respondents Felt that Factors Relating to Study and Motivation Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Failure to schedule my time wisely	9%	22%	30%	38%	2.98
Poor study habits	10	24	29	37	2.93
Failure to learn how to study well	16	27	26	30	2.71
Failure to keep up in my coursework	15	32	32	21	2.59
Inability to concentrate	15	36	24	25	2.58
Lack of personal discipline	18	37	20	25	2.52
Poor study conditions in residence halls	23	27	28	22	2.50
Unrealistic idea of amount of study required	23	31	27	20	2.44
Too much time spent on outside or extracurricular activities	27	27	20	25	2.43
Difficulty in taking and using classroom notes well	36	33	19	13	2.09
Not personally ready to meet college expectations	47	30	14	9	1.85
Failure to attend class regularly	54	22	13	11	1.80
No real career or academic goals	60	19	10	11	1.71
Preoccupied with the thought of a boy or girl friend at home	62	16	11	11	1.71
Lack of desire to be in college	60	22	8	10	1.67
No satisfactory place to study on campus	64	23	9	4	1.53

A fourth of the respondents also indicated that certain motivational problems (lack of personal discipline, inability to concentrate, and over-emphasis on extracurricular or outside activities) were major reasons for their academic downfall. The freshmen in the study blamed more than their own shortcomings, however; half of those surveyed felt that poor study conditions in the residence halls were at least moderately responsible for their grade difficulties. "Although there are rules involving quiet hours in the dorms, I don't feel that they are enforced adequately," contended one person. "In my dorm, it is rare to have a good study atmosphere around the halls before midnight. The R.A.'s aren't around much during the evening, and they never give serious reprimands when they are around." Stated another disturbed resident: "Studying in my room is impossible because of a roommate's stereo habits or the volume of the stereo in the room next door. Our corridor is only quiet after visitation hours. I have tried studying elsewhere but do not always have the materials I need."

Although less than a quarter of the freshmen cited the absence of career or academic goals as a major or moderate reason for their scholastic performance, 58 percent of those students who were unclassified academically did so. In addition, a greater percentage of women than men (26% to 16%) and a larger proportion of students who had attended a private rather than a public high school (33% to 17%) mentioned this factor as at least a moderate influence on their grades. Students who were placed on academic probation (those who achieved less than a 1.7 average) were more likely than other underachievers to cite failure to attend class regularly as a major or moderate reason for their grades (31% to 17%). More women than men did also (30% to 18%).

III. INSTITUTIONAL INCOMPATIBILITY

Most of the freshmen did not strongly connect their academic shortcomings with their ability to conform to the personal or social settings at Miami. Only one-third of the respondents felt that their low grades were due in part to their decision to attend this institution (although a majority believed that the stiff competition from other students and their inability to adjust to the university environment were at least minor influences on their scholastic performance).

Table 3. Degree to Which Respondents Felt that Factors Relating to Institutional Incompatibility Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Competition from other students too stiff	38%	34%	17%	12%	2.02
Inability to adjust to college environment	44	27	19	10	1.96
Displeasure with life in residence halls	58	19	14	9	1.75
Roommate problems	62	16	12	10	1.71
Dissatisfaction with social relationships at college	61	23	11	5	1.60
Wrong college choice	67	16	8	8	1.57
Economic or social background did not prepare me for college	76	13	6	5	1.39
Inability to fit in with other students	81	11	4	3	1.30

The degree to which the freshmen blamed their academic problems on their failure to adjust to Miami's environment varied with the character of their home community. Two-thirds of the students who reside in a large city indicated that this was at least a minor reason for their difficulties -- and one-fifth of these individuals felt it was a major reason. In sharp contrast, most of the persons who live in the suburb of a large city indicated that this factor was not responsible for their performance -- and only 4 percent cited it as a major reason. Undergraduates who come from farm or village areas tended to be quite diverse in their responses to this item; although 57 percent of these individuals did not think that their ability to adjust to the college environment affected their grades at all, 22 percent felt it was a major factor. A greater percentage of women than men (38% to 20%) indicated that stiff competition from other students was at least a moderate reason for their academic difficulties. Whereas only 6 percent of the white participants in the survey cited their economic or social background as a major or moderate cause of their grade problems, 42 percent of the black respondents did so.

IV. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Many of the freshman in this study believed that their unsatisfactory high school background in certain key subjects heavily contributed to their academic failure first semester. A majority of the respondents indicated that inadequate preparation in English and Science was at least a minor reason for their difficulties, and almost half felt this way about their preparation in Math. Indeed, more than a fourth of the students insisted that their poor secondary education in English and Writing was a major explanation for their performance at Miami. Noted one respondent: "When I got to Miami, I felt that I was on an equal level with most other Miami freshmen, but now I realize that I have to work harder than others because I've been inadequately prepared for most areas of my academic life at Miami, especially in the English and Science Departments." Another person put it a bit more strongly: "I have always griped about my high school education. I was poorly prepared in English...I'm not dumb. I just was not prepared to write well."

Table 4. Degree to Which Respondents Felt That Factors Relating to Educational Background Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Inadequate high school preparation in English and Writing	40%	20%	13%	27%	2.26
Inadequate high school preparation in Sciences	43	19	16	22	2.17
Failure to get adequate tutorial assistance	42	28	16	14	2.02
Inadequate high school preparation in Math	51	19	12	17	1.96
Lack of academic aptitude	45	32	17	6	1.83
Inadequate high school preparation in Foreign Languages	69	11	7	13	1.64
Lack of ability to read well	66	19	8	7	1.56
Lack of knowledge of how to use the library properly	74	16	8	3	1.40

The impact of high school preparation on college performance, at least in the view of these freshmen, is especially well demonstrated by an analysis of the data on the basis of academic division. Of the humanities and social science students in the survey, 38 percent and 36 percent respectively cited inadequate high school background in the sciences as a major reason for their academic difficulties, and 35 percent and 29 percent respectively indicated that poor training in foreign languages was a major cause of their scholastic

problems. There was little difference, however, between the overall responses and those of natural science students on these items. Less than adequate preparation in English and Writing was cited as a major or moderate reason by a greater percentage of students who had attended public rather than private high schools (45% to 23%). This factor also was more heavily stressed by students who had achieved less than a 1.7 grade average in their first term at Miami. Failure to obtain satisfactory tutorial assistance was at least a minor reason for the academic performance of more natural science students (71%) and fewer social science majors (39%) than was true for the total group of freshmen. As it was, almost one-third of the respondents felt that their failure to obtain proper tutorial help was an important cause of their scholastic difficulties.

V. PERSONAL FRUSTRATION

At first glance, the items in this category appear to be unassociated. However, the factor analysis showed a strong intercorrelation among these variables, and a close inspection of them reveals a fascinating dimensional quality. Each of the factors relates either to possible causes of student frustration with aspects of the Miami experience (rules and regulations, closed out of courses, lack of privacy and pressure from home) or to the way in which some may have tried to overcome these frustrations (use of drugs or alcohol). Only a handful of respondents attributed their academic performance to drinking or drug abuse or to being closed out of desired courses. A majority of the freshmen, though, indicated that lack of personal privacy and pressure from home about grades were at least minor reasons for their scholastic problems. Women, in particular, stressed the latter item, with more than one-third indicating that it was a major or moderate factor in determining their academic standing.

Table 5. Degree to Which Respondents Felt That Factors Relating to Personal Frustration Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Lack of personal privacy	47%	23%	15%	14%	1.97
Pressure from home to achieve high grades	47	26	17	10	1.91
Too many rules and regulations	58	24	9	8	1.67
"Closed out" of the courses I wanted	72	14	7	7	1.49
Problems related to the use of drugs other than alcohol	83	9	4	3	1.28
Problems related to the use of alcohol	85	7	5	3	1.26

VI. ADVISING AND COUNSELING

The findings in Table 6 suggest that a sizable segment of the survey participants believed that better academic advising and consultation might have made a difference for them scholastically. More than one-third of the respondents indicated that their failure to get more thorough advising was at least a moderate reason for their grade difficulties, and half of the freshmen felt this way about their neglect to discuss course difficulties with their instructors. Applied Science students emphasized the importance of the former factor more than did persons from other academic divisions, with 53 percent citing it as a major or moderate reason for their poor performance. This particular finding, however, did not meet the .05 level of significance. A higher proportion of graduates from private high schools (28%) also pinpointed the lack of adequate academic advising as a major cause of their scholastic problems. Two subjects which often arise in freshman advising — selection of major and size of course load — were perceived by many students as being at the root of their difficulties. A comparatively high percentage of Applied Science and Natural Science majors (46% and 44% respectively) and a much smaller proportion of Business students (6%) felt their choice of major was at least moderately responsible for their grades.

Table 6. Degree to Which Respondents Felt That Factors Relating to Advising and Counseling Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Failure to discuss academic difficulties with course instructors	20%	31%	26%	24%	2.53
Need for more thorough academic advising	27	37	21	15	2.25
Lack of confidence in my ability to succeed academically	31	27	27	14	2.24
Excessive course load	39	26	14	21	2.16
Poor academic advising at Summer Orientation	56	14	12	18	1.92
Wrong choice of major or career field	56	15	11	18	1.91
Failure to get adequate personal (non-academic) counseling	55	21	14	10	1.78
Poor academic advice from Freshman Adviser	60	18	10	12	1.74
Lack of knowledge about pertinent academic regulations and procedures	63	21	12	4	1.57
Failure to attend Summer Orientation	87	4	3	5	1.27

Most of the poor academic achievers perceived that the quality of the advising at Summer Orientation had no bearing on their academic performance. However, many students disagreed — and specifically complained in their written comments that they were steered into courses which were too advanced for them. One respondent recommended that a larger number of Summer Orientation staff members be made available "as the new students are given their [course registration] sheets to fill out." In a finding consistent with others in this section, freshmen from the Applied Sciences were more prone than their counterparts from other disciplines to identify Summer Orientation advising as a major reason for their scholastic problems (28% did so). Students who indicated that they chose their majors after Summer Orientation but before the beginning of classes also blamed summer advising more heavily than did other respondents. This was true as well for those freshmen who earned less than a 1.7 average first semester; a fourth of these individuals claimed that poor advice at Orientation was a major cause of their academic failure. A greater proportion of black freshmen (28%) and, not surprisingly, first-term students who live more than 500 miles from the campus (27%) felt that their failure to attend Summer Orientation had at least a moderate impact on their ultimate performance. The views of respondents toward the role of the Freshman Advisers in this matter varied on the basis of sex and race; a higher percentage of women and black students (31% and 41% respectively) believed that poor academic assistance from their Freshman Advisers contributed to their academic difficulties in a major or moderate way.

Women were also more likely than men to feel that their lack of self-confidence in their ability and their failure to discuss academic difficulties with instructors were important reasons for their scholastic performance. A greater proportion of black students than other undergraduates linked their academic deficiencies to their failure to get adequate personal counseling, lack of knowledge about pertinent regulations and procedures, and choice of a major or career field. Indeed, more than 40 percent of the black respondents cited the last of these items as a major reason for their scholastic undoing.

VII. PERSONAL PROBLEMS

A solid majority of the freshmen apparently did not believe that personal problems (at least most of those in Table 7) contributed to their academic plight. An exception was failure to get enough sleep, which 60 percent of the respondents thought was at least a minor cause for their unsatisfactory performance. As might be expected, there was a strong relationship between the distance of a student's home from Miami and the extent to which time spent at home was stressed as a reason for poor scholarship. Of the individuals who live only 11 to 50 miles from campus, 38 percent cited this factor as a reason (a figure twice as high as the overall response to this item).

Table 7. Degree to Which Respondents Felt That Factors Relating to Personal Problems Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Failure to get enough sleep	40%	32%	14%	14%	2.02
Family problems	70	15	8	6	1.51
Illness or injury	71	15	7	7	1.49
Too much time spent at home	80	9	5	5	1.34
Concerns related to pledging a social fraternity or sorority	83	7	6	3	1.30

VIII. FINANCES

Although the factors relating to finances were not viewed as determinants of grade performance by most of the freshmen, these items were considerably more important to those students who were on financial aid, held part-time jobs, or came from an economically distressed family. Too much time spent with part-time employment was cited as a major or moderate reason for poor academic accomplishment by a fourth of the respondents whose father lacked a high school diploma (parental educational level is one accepted indicator of the socio-economic status of a student's family) and by one-fifth of those freshmen who were employed part-time. Financial worries were named as a major or moderate cause by 37 percent of the respondents whose fathers were non-high school graduates, 30 percent of those who were receiving financial aid from Miami, and one-fourth of those who held a part-time job. In addition, a considerably larger proportion of black students (21% and 31% respectively) viewed time spent with employment and financial worries as major contributors to their academic difficulties.

Table 8. Degree to Which Respondents Felt That Factors Relating to Finances Were Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Financial worries	62%	21%	8%	9%	1.65
Too much time spent with part-time employment	87	5	3	5	1.25

IX. INTEREST IN COURSES

Most of the survey participants attributed their low grades at least in part to their disinterest in their courses. Women stressed the importance of the three items in this section more heavily than did men. Lack of concern with course material also was cited as a major reason by even a higher proportion (30% or more) of those students who selected an academic major either during the first two years of high school or after the beginning of college — or who had not yet chosen a major field of study.

Table 9. Degree to Which Respondents Felt the Factors Relating to Course Interest Were Reasons for Poor Academic Performance

	Not a Reason	Minor Reason	Moderate Reason	Major Reason	Mean Score
Required courses I did not want to take	23%	20%	23%	34%	2.67
Lack of interest in course material	15	34	28	22	2.58
Wrong choice of courses	37	25	14	24	2.26

X. MAJOR REASONS FOR POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

In order to pinpoint some of the primary causes for poor academic achievement among Miami freshmen, Table 10 presents the factors which the students in this survey indicated were most important in explaining their scholastic performance during their first semester at college. All items for which there was a mean score of at least 2.20 are included —— in the order of the mean score. Accompanying each factor is the particular category to which it was assigned in this report and the percentage of respondents who cited it as a major or moderate reason for their grade problems.

Table 10. List of Factors Which Respondents Indicated Were Most Responsible for Poor Academic Achievement

	Mean Score	Major and Moderate Reason	Category
Failure to schedule my time wisely	2.98	68%	Study & Motivation
Poor study habits	2.93	66	Study & Motivation
Difficulty in taking examinations	2.83	65	Instruction
Failure to learn how to study well	2.71	56	Study & Motivation
Required courses I did not want to take	2.67	57	Interest in Courses
Failure to keep up in my coursework	2.59	53	Study & Motivation
Lack of interest in course material	2.58	50	Interest in Courses
Inability to concentrate	2.58	49	Study & Motivation
Too few examinations to demonstrate knowledge	2.57	52	Instruction
Failure to discuss academic difficulties with course instructors	2.53	50	Advising & Counseling
Lack of personal discipline	2.52	45	Study & Motivation
Poor study conditions in residence hall	2.50	50	Study & Motivation
Unrealistic idea of amount of study necessary	2.44	47	Study & Motivation
Too much time spent on outside or extracurricular activities	2.43	45	Study & Motivation
Examinations did not fairly evaluate my knowledge	2.42	45	Instruction
Nonstimulating instructors	2.41	46	Instruction
Inadequate high school preparation in English and Writing	2.26	40	Educational Background
Wrong choice of courses	2.26	33	Interest in Courses
Poor teaching by instructors	2.25	38	Instruction
Need for more thorough academic advising	2.25	36	Advising & Counseling
Lack of confidence in my ability to succeed academically	2.24	41	Advising & Counseling

The above data counter the contention that studies such as this one are of questionable validity because participants are too likely to blame institutional or environmental factors for their academic difficulties instead of their personal shortcomings. The freshmen in this survey placed the greatest responsibility for their low grades on their own lack of motivation, proper study habits, and attention to school work. Indeed, a solid majority of the reasons emphasized most heavily by these students can be interpreted as self-criticisms rather than criticisms of Miami's services and programs. Nonetheless, many respondents clearly indicated that their personal limitations cannot completely explain their poor performance — that other factors such as University and divisional requirements, faculty teaching and examining procedures, residence hall atmosphere, background in English and Writing, and quality of academic advising also contributed to their problems. The task now confronting Miami's professional community is to decide what steps can and should be taken, in terms of counseling and policy planning, to help those students who have the ability to succeed in college but who face the prospect of becoming a statistic in the attrition rate.

This report is a condensation and interpretation of the complete set of data that resulted from the survey. For additional information about the survey or for a further breakdown of the findings on the basis of the respondents' demographic characteristics, contact Michael Keller, Coordinator of the Student Life Research Service, at 213 Warfield Hall or 529-3931.

APPENDIX: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Comparative percentage breakdown, by demographic subgroup, of the total freshman population during the 1977 Fall Semester and the underachieving freshmen who participated in the survey.

	Freshman Underachievers	All Freshmen*
Academic Division		
Arts & Sciences	45%	44%
Business	27	28
Education	11	13
Applied Science	9	6
Fine Arts	5	6
Western College	3	3
	(N=282)	(N=3,940)
Sex		
Male	55%	49%
Female	45	51
	(N=301)	(N=3,940)
Race		
White	88%	97%
Black	10	2
Other	2	1
	(N=299)	(N=2,622)
Father's Educational Level		
Non-high school graduate	6%	5%
High school graduate	16	17
Post secondary school other than college	3	3
Some college	18	12
Baccalaureate degree	29	39
Graduate or professional degree	27	25
	(N=297)	(N=2,615)
Average Grade in High School		
A or A+	10%	22%
A-	13	24
B+	28	29
B	27	18
B-	16	5
C+ or less	7	3
	(N=299)	(N=2,637)

	Freshman Underachievers	All Freshmen*
Receiving Financial Aid		
Yes	22%	30%
No	78	70
	(N=298)	(N=3,940)
Distance of Miami from Parents' Home		
10 miles or less	1%	2%
11 miles to 50 miles	24	21
51 miles to 100 miles	14	13
101 miles to 500 miles	53	56
More than 500 miles	8	8
	(N=300)	(N=2,645)
Grade Point Average		
Less than 1.70	45%	Not applicable
1.70 or above	55	
	(N=299)	
Type of Home Community		
Rural farm, village	8%	Data not available
Small or medium-sized town	31	
Small or medium-sized city	24	
Large city	10	
Suburb of a large city	28	
	(N=301)	
Employed Part-Time		
Yes	22%	Data not available
No	78	
	(N=298)	
When Major or Career Field Chosen		
During the first two years of high school	14%	Data not available
During the last two years of high school	48	
After high school graduation but before Summer Orientation	16	
After Summer Orientation but before the beginning of college	7	
After the beginning of college	4	
I have not selected a major yet	11	
	(N=298)	
Size of High School		
Less than 100 students	4%	Data not available
100 to 500	18	
500 to 1,000	28	
More than 1,000	50	
	(N=299)	

	Freshman Underachievers	All Freshmen*
Type of High School		
Public	80%	86%
Private	20	14
	(N=297)	(N=3,940)

* The data on academic division and sex were obtained from the Office of the Registrar. The figures for race, father's educational level, average grade in high school, and distance from parents' home were secured from the 1977 freshman survey conducted by the American Council on Education. Information about the type of high school attended was provided by the Office of Admission, and the source of the data on financial aid recipients was the Office of Student Financial Aid.